

REMARKS**1. New Inventor's Declarations.**

New (substitute) Inventor's Declarations executed by the inventors were submitted on 31 March 2004 in response to the examiner's request.

2. Specification Amendments

The correction to the priority claim from a "continuation" to a "continuation-in-part" and updating the status of the parent patent application was submitted on 8 September 2003 in response to the examiner's request.

3. Claim Amendments.

Claim 14 has been amended to correct the antecedent basis issue raised by the examiner. No new matter has been added.

4. Petition to the Commissioner under 37 CFR 1.182.


Applicant has filed a Petition under 37 CFR 1.182 regarding the amendment to Applicant's claim of priority. A copy of the Petition is enclosed for the examiner's information, and the original Petition was transmitted to the petitions branch. Applicant has filed the Petition under 37 CFR 1.182 rather than under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) because it is Applicant's position that because Applicant did *originally* claim priority in the original patent application papers by referencing the priority application by application number and filing date, and merely changed the type of priority from a "continuation" to a "continuation-in-part" at the request of the examiner, Applicant has not "presented" this claim for priority after the time period provided by 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2) so as to entail the need for a petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) and the significant fee under 37 CFR 1.17(t).

CONCLUSION

Applicant believes it has fully addressed the examiner's concerns and the claims are in condition for allowance, and Applicant respectfully requests such action.

If the examiner has any final concerns that can be addressed over the telephone, please have the examiner contact the below-signed patent lawyer of record to expedite the allowance of this patent application.

Respectfully submitted,


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